

REMARKS

The Office Action dated September 7, 2005, has been carefully reviewed and the following remarks are submitted in response thereto. Claims 1 - 8 are now pending in the application.

Objections to Specification, Claims and Drawings:

In the Office Action, several typographical errors were referenced where the "e" was missing from several words in the specification and claims. These errors have been corrected in the above amendments.

The specification has also been amended to reflect the layering depicted in the drawings. This amendment should obviate some of the Examiner's objections to the drawings.

Furthermore, the specification has been amended to add reference numeral 50, shown in Figure 5 to the description of the pawl teeth.

None of the above described amendments to the specification add any new matter to the application.

Lastly, the Examiner's objection to the drawings due to the use of reference numeral 40 has been addressed in the attached replacement drawing sheet wherein the leader line in Figure 5 now includes an arrowhead which points to the opening instead of the body of the locking mechanism.

Claim Rejections

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1 - 8.

The Examiner's §103(a) rejection of independent claim 1, based on U.S. Patent No. 5,337,528 of Jaworski et al. ("Jaworski") in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,364,257 of Holder ("Holder") is respectfully traversed.

The Applicants assert that the combination of Jaworski with Holder is improper. Specifically, Jaworski is a child assist rail and support system, while the Holder patent is a retainer system for positioning brake lines in over-the-highway trucks and tractors. Neither of these patents teach toward or suggest to one skilled in the relevant art to

make such a combination. The references cited are not each directed toward solving the same problem to which the present invention is also directed, therefore the rejection should be withdrawn.

The Examiner has not specifically explained where motivation to combine these references comes from. Jaworski implicitly requires that a single strap be used to lock both handrails in place. This is demonstrated in column 6, lines 38 –54, wherein a cinching element 48 increases the tension on the single strap, and which is “operative to maintain the auxiliary rail 20 in a substantially rigid relationship with respect to the handrail 16.” The Applicants assert that the increased tension provided by the cinching element of Jaworski could not provide the “rigid relationship” between the rails if a two-strap approach was implemented and therefore any such combination would be improper.

The Examiner’s rejection under §112 of claim 3 has also been addressed. The Applicant has amended claim 3 by inserting the phrase –as defined in claim 1– after “assembly” in line 1 as suggested by the Examiner.

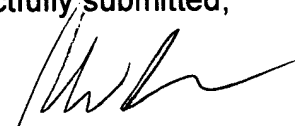
Claim 4 has been amended to include all of the limitations of intervening independent claim 1. Therefore, independent claim 4 should now be in condition suitable for allowance.

The remaining claims 2, 3, and 5-8 depend from claim 1 and are therefore also allowable.

Lastly, the Applicants have made amendments to several claims to correct minor typographical and grammatical errors to improve continuity in those claims.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, claims 1-8 are now in condition for allowance. Favorable action is respectfully solicited.

Respectfully submitted,



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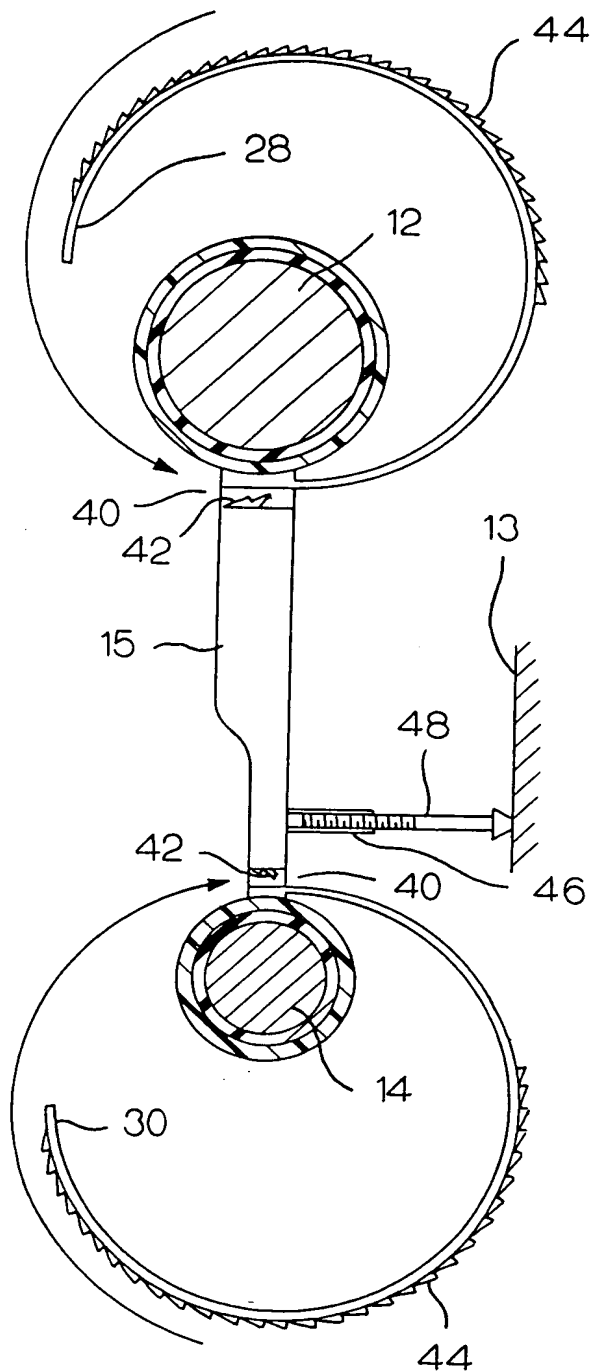


FIG. 4

Annotated, marked-up drawings

(arrowhead now points to opening instead of "flange").

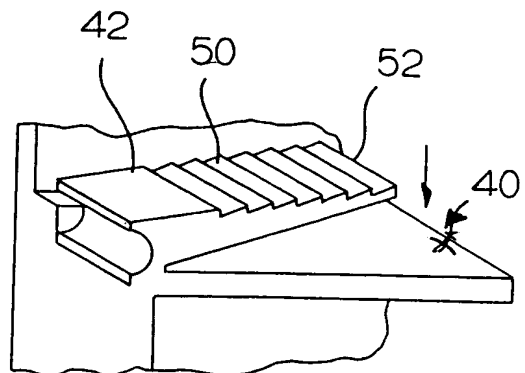


FIG. 5